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Salisbury's Earliest Settlers

BY

JOHN Q. EVANS.

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Salisbury's Earliest Settlers.

BY JOHN Q. EVANS.

In extending a welcome to your association upon this visit to the old town of Salisbury, a town indeed rich in treasure to the historian, and of whose history we as common descendents of the first settlers may well be proud, it becomes my pleasant duty to briefly turn the pages of a few of the first years of her history. trusting that, though I may add but little to what is already familiar to you, I may yet present more concisely the conditions under which the new settlement was placed when in its infancy, the struggle to maintain a foothold in the wilderness made for these hardy pioneers—a life which must have been terribly in earnest, and which will in part account for their seeming arbitrary rule over their people by the governing authorities. It is my purpose to trace briefly of the settlement of the old plantation of Merrimac, of its early settlers and of the growth of the town during the first sixty years following its incorporation, a period extending down to the time of Queen Anne's war, when the horrors of Indian barbarities spread terror among the settlers of the province.

With the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay colony at Salem and the large influx of immigrants, the bounds of the colony were being continually extended. To the south, where they soon met the bounds of the Plymouth colony, and north that they might gain possession of all possible territory in that direction. Who was the first settler on the north bank of the Merrimac we shall never know. For several years prior to the grant by the general court in 1638 the plantation was known by the name of Merrimac. Mr. Merrill, in his history of Amesbury, refers to John Bayley of Newbury, who came over from England in the ship Angel Gabriel, August, 1635, as the first settler, and in support cites that by order of the court June 6, 1637, the constable at Newbury was directed to apprehend John Bayley who lived beyond the Merrimac. It seems probable, however, that a squatter settlement had been established for some years prior to this. As early as 1633 in sundry charges preferred against Gov. Winthrop for exceeding his authority, together with other questions, he is asked why he has licensed a certain person to settle at Merrimac, four years before Bayley's time and while he was yet living in England. All this, however, is not of importance,

as the date of the birth of the town must spring from Sept. 6,1638,when Mr. Bradstreet, Mr. Dudley,Jr.,Mr. Batter, Mr. Winsley, Capt. Dennison, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Woodbridge, Mr. Batte, Henry Bilye, Giles Firman, Richard Kent and John Saunders were allowed to begin a plantation at Merrimac. Of these twelve men two only, Samuel Winsley and Henry Biley, lived and died in the new town. Christopher Batt and John Saunders, both prominent in town affairs, soon moved away, Batt to Boston in 1651, where he became a prominent merchant, and ten years later was accidentally shot by his son, while Saunders in 1656 moved to Wells, Maine. Mr. Bradstreet was a son in law of Gov. Dudley,and governor of the colony 1680 to 1685; Thomas Dudley, Jr., son of Gov. Dudley; Edmund Batter, a rich malster of Salem, very prominent in colonial affairs; Daniel Dennison,an original proprietor of Newbury and son in law of Gov. Simonds; Dr. John Clarke, who owned Clarke's farm at Newbury, later a celebrated physician of Boston; John Woodbridge,a son in law of Gov. Dudley, the first minister of Andover, and later returned to England; Giles Firman, who later returned to England and became an eminent divine. In a sermon before parliament he said that during a residence of seven years in the colony he had never seen an intoxicated person. Richard Kent was a rich malster of Newbury.

The plantation was very indefinite as to its boundaries, having the Merrimac on the south, the ocean east, while on the north towards Hampton no definite bounds were as yet established, and to the west was the boundless forest. With the absence of all roads and bridges the first settlements were always made near to a convenient place for water transportation. When the first settlers arrived at Merrimac they probably came up town creek and landed on the high land at what is now called the landing below the residence of Dr. Spalding.

The grant of the plantation having been made so late in the season it is not probable that an actual settlement of the town was undertaken until the spring of 1639, when we have record of sixty-eight families having received grants of common land. As early as June of this year the plantation had assumed full municipal control when at a town meeting land was divided and grants made to the settlers. During the year the name of the town was changed to Colchester, only to be again changed in 1640 to the present name of Salisbury.

One of the first questions for the town to determine was that of its boundary line, and as early as 1640 the line between the town and Hampton on the north,also with Haverhill, were run out by a committee of townsmen. Neither of these lines proved satisfactory, however,and not until 1667 was the line between Salisbury and Haverhill settled,when the general court ordered a line beginning at Holts rocks and to run N. W.

Of the Hampton line starting at the bound rocks and running to Mr Batchelder's farm (near the brick schoolhouse) there was much controversy, and from 1640 until 1657 there was a constant wrangle, until finally in this latter year the Shapley line was accepted. The bound rocks at Hampton river mouth marked A. D., 1657, H. B., is yet to be plainly read. From this point the line was run to Mr. Batchelder's farm, thence to the Hawk's Nest, so called, near the residence of John Gills, on the road from Amesbury to Exeter, and so along the northern boundary of South Hampton, N. H., and continuing a westerly course until it met the Haverhill line.

This intersection of the Hampton and Haverhill line is at what is now

the town of Hampstead, N. H., in Angle pond, so called, the two lines meeting at an acute angle. This territory embraced all of the present towns of Salisbury, Amesbury, Merrimac and South Hampton, together with a portion of Seabrook, Newton, Kingston, Plaistow and Hampstead, New Hampshire, a tract of land averaging some five miles in width and of an extreme length of fourteen miles and embracing some fifty square miles of land. A town of this vast extent must of necessity have been the cause of inconvenience to the inhabitants who lived in the remote sections. To attend church, coming from E. Hampstead to yonder church site, or to attend the numerous town meetings must have been a serious undertaking, and every good citizen was expected to do both of these with the most faithful compliance. Is it any wonder that a church was wanted on the west of the Powow? And the erection of a new town, which was done in 1668, and the Powow river as a line, cut the territory nearly in two equal portions.

Very soon after the settlement of the town in 1643 a new county was formed, comprising the towns on the north of the Merrimac, namely, Salisbury, Haverhill, Hampton, Dover, Exeter and Portsmouth. At first the county courts were held alternately at Salisbury and Hampton, but after six years it was ordered "That Salisbury shall be the shire town of the county," and on the common near the church was the court house, while near at hand on the rising ground stood the stockade. After an existance of fifty years the four northerly towns were taken into New Hampshire, and Salisbury, Amesbury and Haverhill were joined to Essex county, when the Norfolk county ceased to exist.

The New Hampshire line has always been a bone of contention and after many fruitless attempts finally, in 1737, the king ordered a line to run three miles north of the Merrimac to be the southern boundary of the state of New Hampshire. The commissioner began at Black Rocks and measured north three miles and then ran a line to conform to the general trend of the river. To this line New Hampshire objected as Black Rocks was not at the mouth of the Merrimac but three-fourths of a mile to the north (Belknap, page 248). This is of value as showing that the north end of Plum Island down nearly to the hotel was, prior to the river breaking through in the early days of this century, a part of Salisbury and over which the town may again assume municipal authority. This new state boundary was the cause of much trouble to our town, and what is now South Hampton and Seabrook were cut off from our northern border. When having shrunk to only one-fourth of our original area we were allowed to remain undisturbed for 145 years, when in 1886 the two villages on either bank of the Powow were united, and we suffered a new loss of territory, until to-day, having lost so largely of our area and wealth, we feel that we have little left us but the tradition of our early days, and to this we shall cling, determined that these at least shall not be taken from us.

We find record of 68 original settlers of whom 10 were honored with the title of Mr., but it is not safe to assume prior residence by these men over others of the times as we often find names which show their owners to have been contemporaneous with the 68 first mentioned by Thomas Bradbury, the town clerk of the time. To mention all of the early families of the town would require a volume in itself. As many of them have either done valient service for the town or were ancestors of prominent families, I shall touch very briefly of the more prominent of them.

Christopher Batt was one of the

most influential men in the plantation. His lot, where the railroad crosses the road near the landing, which he sold to the Buswells in 1650, ten acres for £52, has been in the Buswell family to this day. Batt's hill, near Edmund Morrill's, was named in his honor, also the land there was divided about 1700 and called the Batt's hill division. A selectman and deputy during his whole residence here in town.

Thomas Bradbury lived just south of Batt's. One of the best educated men in the settlement, being probably continuously on the board of selectmen from the first board, 1639, to 1691, over fifty years; town clerk forty-two years, deputy several terms, and captain of the militia. In 1652 he was chosen schoolmaster at £20 salary, half paid in corn. He died 1695, leaving £5 for the use of the poor of the town, the first record of our town having been the recipient of a public bequest. His wife, Mary, was a daughter of John Perkins of Ipswich and who, in her old age, was tried for witchcraft and sentenced to death, but was later liberated. There is little doubt but what this was largely the result of malice, as her principle accusers were open enemies of hers. As early as 1649 we find mention of the orchard of Thomas Bradbury.

George Carr was originally located north of the landing, but was granted the large island in the Merrimac in 1640 and known as Carr's Island, in honor of the early ferryman who had charge of the ferry to Newbury for many years. He and his son Richard also had control of the ferry at Amesbury from 1669 to 1696, when they sold it to Capt. John March for £137. Of his ten children William married Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Pike, and lived for a time at Amesbury.

Roger Eastman, supposed to be the ancestor of all of this name in America, born 1611. Of his ten children Nathaniel married a daughter of Thomas Bradbury. Philip moved to Haverhill and a son, Captain Ebenezer, with six boys, were of the first settlers of Penacook, (Concord) N. H., his team being the first to make a track through the primeval forests. Sarah married Solomon Shepherd, a prominent character of the times. One branch of this family at a later date lived at "Rabbit corner," whence Ezekiel Webster of Salisbury, N. H., came to find a wife, who returned with him to plant a home in the wilderness, and where in the log cabin which their labor had erected was born that grand specimen of mankind, the great Daniel Webster.

You will pardon me for a slight digression. The mother of Daniel Webster deserves more than a passing notice. Abigail Eastman was the daughter of Roger Eastman, the great grandson of Roger, the first settler, her mother being Jerusha Fitts, the daughter of Richard Fitts, who married Sarah Thorn. Abigail had two brothers younger than herself, Ezekiel and Daniel, and it is fair to assume that her boys were named for her two brothers living in the old town of Salisbury.

Samuel Dudley, another of our early settlers, who during his brief stay in the town shone forth as one of her most illustrous citizens. He lived just north of the present church site. A son of Gov. Thomas Dudley, he married Mary, the daughter of Gov. Winthrop, who died ten years later, and is buried in yonder cemetery on the road to the beach. Later he married May Byley, and in 1650 he became pastor of the church at Exeter. As selectman, assessor and keeper of the Norfolk county court he exercised much influence in town affairs.

Robert Fitts originally located in the corner of the Amesbury road and road to Exeter and is referred to as "Fitts, his corner." He early moved

his family to Ipswich, but later his grandson Richard returned to Salisbury and became the progenitor of all of the name who have since lived in this town.

Edward French was the ancestor of one of our most substantial families. He located on the beach road next east of Major Pike's, and the lot is in the same family to this day. His was the third largest estate in town. Selectman for several terms.

Samuel Hall, frequently selectman, directed by the general court to care for the church council to meet there; an outspoken person of strong mind.

Richard Goodale was for many years the hunter hired by the town to rid the settlement of wolves and foxes. The large swamp on the east side of the road to Exeter is known as Goodale's swamp. A daughter married William Allen, the pioneer. A son removed to Boston. In 1664 the school was kept at young Goodale's house.

The Clough family, now extinct, was for many years prominent in town. John was the first of the family. He early lived at the Plains near the site of the Plains schoolhouse. Of his children John married Mercy Page, a near neighbor, and lived on the place now occupied by the writer. Thomas lived on the location of the Plains schoolhouse. Most of this family emigrated to New Hampshire.

The Morrills have ever been one of the most numerous families of the town. Abraham and Isaac, brothers, came from England 1632, first settling at Cambridge. Abraham was a prominent farmer and blacksmith and a heavy tax-payer. His wife was Sarah, the daughter of Robert Clement of Haverhill. He in 1641 had land granted him where the present parsonage is. A year later he with Henry Saywood built a grist mill. He died in 1662 leaving property to the value of £507, new house, fifty-seven acres of land, three shares grist mill, part of a vessel, smith's tools. Of his children Moses married Rebecca Barnes, Abraham married Sarah, daughter of Wymond Bradbury and grandchild of Thomas Bradbury and Robert Pike. Isaac, another son, probably lived near Munday hill, and his son Abraham located at the Plains on the farm now owned by Edmund Morrill and which has been in the family for some 200 years.

Henry Munday, the richest man in town, frequently held town office. Munday hill is named in his honor, also Munday Island in the salt marsh near the beach road.

Richard North, a resident of the town holding different offices. He also rang the meeting house bell in 1647-8. He later moved to Salem. It was North's daughter Susanna who married George Martin, and in her old age, convicted of being a witch, was hung on testimony of a most improbable character.

Another name unknown to-day among us is that of "Partridge." William dwelt where the car house now stands. He died prior to 1656, as this year his widow married Anthony Stonyan, a noted person at Hampton. Prominent in local affairs, his sons became even more so in later years. William, Jr., of Portsmouth, a mechanical genius, treasurer of the province, supplied the navy with timber, lieutenant governor 1697, leader of the opposition against John Usher and his party, later removed to Newbury. A son Richard was agent for the province in England. A daughter married Governor Belcher, ruler of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire colonies in 1730, and the mother of Gov. Belcher of Nova Scotia.

John Gill was early in town when he married Phœbe Buswell. He lived at what is since called Gill's corner at the Plains. A daughter Elizabeth married Marris Tucker.

Andrew Greeley was a prominent

man in the early days of the town. He moved to Haverhill, leaving descendents who have kept the name alive to this day.

Stephen Flanders was another prominent settler whose name has been handed down to the present generation.

John Stevens located where to-day Samuel Stevens dwells and the home of the family for two hundred and fifty years. Continually in office, he was an important man in early days. His name is to-day represented in this town.

Samuel Winsley was one of the original grantees of the plantation. His improved method of the manufacture of salt added greatly to the value of this important business, one of the leading industries of the day. A son Ephriam was school master in 1673 at £10 salary per annum.

Robert Ring was granted land at Ring's Island in 1642 if he carry on the fishing business, and in 1654 granted to enjoy the sole right to take fish from the Powow river for five years. A son Jarvis was a lawyer and the first of the profession that I have found in town.

Richard Wells lived near the burying ground. He was a prominent official and deacon of the church, probably brother of Thomas Wells of Ipswich, the father of Rev. Thos. Wells, third minister of Amesbury, who was born 1647, ordained 1672, died 1734.

Henry True, while not of the original settlers, was very early at Salisbury when he married Israel, a sister of Major Robert Pike. After his death his widow married Joseph Fletcher. Of his children Henry, Jr., married Jane, the daughter of Thomas Bradbury. He was for years the leading military man of the town. His records testify that he was a fine writer and well educated. He lived where Mr. P. A. True now resides.

Marris Tucker, another settler in town, ancestor of all the Tuckers of this section. His first wife was a daughter of John Stevens, and second, Elizabeth, daughter of John Gill. A cooper, he lived on the Plains, selling the farm in 1699 to Samuel Joy. He made the bricks for the parsonage house built in 1693, and evidences of the old yard are to be seen at this day on the farm which he occupied, now owned by Mr. Frank Sanborn.

Another prominent family was the Browns. Christian, a widow with four sons, were of the first settlers. One of the sons, Henry, was very prominent in town affairs. He died in 1701, aged 86. Of his children, Abraham married Elizabeth Shepherd and lived at the Plains, the old farm being yet known as the Brown place. A second son, Nathaniel, was a leading military man.

William Osgood, the youngest of three brothers, born 1609. At Salisbury, 1640. Of his children, Elizabeth married Robert Quimby, Joanna married Robert Jones, Mary married Thomas Currier. He is mentioned as building a barn for John Spencer in 1642 at Newbury; owned land at Round hill; gave half of grist mill to son William, other half to grandson, John Osgood.

Robert Pike, the great commoner, came over from England with his father, John Pike, and others of the family, and early settled at Newbury. Robert was of the original settlers of Salisbury and in later years his father lived here with him. Robert received in England a good education. A ready writer and debator, he took the freeman's oath in 1637 and at once assumed the position of a leader in the affairs of the town and province. His wife was Sarah Saunders, and he had a family of three boys and four girls. Always interested in public affairs he was early appointed to end small cases. In 1647 was lieutenant of the militia, and in 1648 at the age of 32 was elected a member of the

Did not receive allotments of land in the first division yet he seems to have been in town by 1640 and was witness to a deed in 1642.

In 1649 he had already bought of Robert Ring his home of nine acres situated in the square at Salisbury. About 1665 he moved to Haverhill and was interested in a mill there, but he does not seem to have ever severed his connection with the town of Salisbury as he was owner of much land in the t town, and in 1674 gave his home in town to his son Philip.A selectman of Salisbury 1657.

In 1672 he deposed that he was 52 years of age and therefore born in 1620.

Of his six children Philip lived in the homestead,Andrew probably dwelt in that portion of Salisbury now Seabrook, N.H. and had a water grist mill which in later generations was owned by the grandfather of Horace Greeley.(N.Y.Tribune.)

His garrison home is mentioned 1698-1702.

As Andrew dwelt in that portion of Salisbury claimed by New Hampshire he was in what was called the disputed territory and was liable to pay a tax from the town of Hampton as well as Salisbury and was chosen a constable of Hampton 1669.

A more complete account of the genealogy of the first and second generations of the family can be found in Hoyt's Old Families of Salisbury.

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legislature, and two years later one of the commissioners of Norfolk county. In 1652 he denounced the law which prohibited any but ordained ministers from preaching, and said "that those who voted for the law violated their oath of freemen, both civil and ecclesiastical." The court, hearing of these words, arraigned Mr. Pike and ordered a penalty of twenty marks in money and a total inability to hold any public office. A petition signed by many in the vicinity praying that Pike be pardoned for his offence was construed by the court as reflecting upon the dignity of that body, and only by the most humble apology did the signers escape the fate to which Pike had been subjected. However, five years later, the fine having been paid, the disability was removed, when the town showed their sympathy for Pike by electing him a member of that same body which had recently inflicted punishment upon him. The same year that Pike returned to the general court the prosecution of the Quakers was begun. Pike at once took an active part in this exciting contest and defended these persecuted people with voice and vote, but he could not check the tide of public sentiment. His defence of the Quakers and his able argument against punishing witches has been considered the grandest efforts of a busy life. Ever ready to defend the rights of the people in freedom of speech, he opposed the narrow methods of the church and their intolerance of any but the established religion, an intoleration characteristic of all creeds and in every country. Through the efforts of Pike and his co-workers, freedom of speech has to-day become one of the chief institutions of this nation to be followed by a religious toleration as liberal as could have been desired by the great commoner himself. At the breaking out of King Philip's war Pike was in command of all of the troops of Norfolk and Piscataqua counties. He continued a magistrate and member of the general court to the end of his life, which occurred in his 91st year. He lived where David Deal now does, on the corner near the church. Buried in the old yard, no stone now marks his resting place.

Having traced very briefly and imperfectly the lives of some of the prominent settlers, I have been forced to pass many names unnoticed, while of others who later settled on the west of the Powow I make no mention, leaving this task for others better qualified than myself to do them justice.

Of other names familiar to that generation as well as oft-times to that of the present day such names as Adams, Allen, Carter, Coffin, Deering, Dow, Fellows, Fuller, Eaton, Greenleaf, Hubbard, Hunt, Moody, Maxfield, March, Page, Sadler, Smith, Shepherd, Stockman, Whitcher and Worthen have been a tower of strength in the community during the eight generations which have elapsed, and they deserve a more extended notice than has yet been given them. I will, however, at this time speak of the first four pastors of the church at Salisbury, men well fitted for their high position, and who did much to mould the sentiment of their generation.

Rev. William Worcester was of the original settlers and preached Christ and salvation to the sturdy band of settlers for twenty-three years, until his death, Oct. 28, 1662. He had a family of nine children, three boys and six girls. He lived where the present church now stands.

The second minister, Rev. John Wheelwright, came to Boston in 1636. Educated at Oxford with Cromwell, he always maintained a friendship for "The Protector." In youth he was remarkable for boldness and firmness of mind. Educated for the ministry, he accepted the Puritan sentiments and soon left for a more

congenial field of labor. Having while at Quincy preached a sermon not according to the prevalent belief he was adjudged guilty of sedition and banished. and he moved to what is now Exeter, N. H. Buying land of the Indians, he was the founder of that town. When in 1642 Exeter became a part of the Massachusetts colony Wheelwright was forced to move from Exeter and took up his residence at Wells, Maine, many of his parish going with him. While at Wells, on his request,the banishment was removed. In 1647 Wheelwright became pastor of the church at Hampton, and there labored until 1656, when he was discharged, and soon made a visit to England,having an audience of an hour with Cromwell. In 1662 he succeeded to the church at Salisbury and had a successful pastorate of fifteen years until his death. Nov. 15, 1679,aged 85 years. Here in 1675 when 81 years of age he fell into a controversy with Major Pike, accusing Pike of delinquencies towards the church—which knowing the man there may have been some ground for the accusation—together with lying revelings and groundless accusations of his pastor. Pike replied by a summons for Wheelwright to appear before him as magistrate to answer. Wheelwright appealed to the general court and finally a committee succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation. Wheelwright owned land at Exeter. Granted right to erect a saw mill at Wells, and at Hampton was deeded the Bachelder farm. He died of appoplexy and lies in the old cemetery with others of his co-workers of that generation.

After a few years,in 1683,the Rev. James Allen was settled. His father, Roger, was one of the 111 signers of the New Haven compact, deacon, legislator and treasurer of the colony. James, born 1657. graduated at Harvard in 1679. He three years later was ordained. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Seaborn Cotton of Hampton. His pastorate was brief as he died March 3, 1696, and his grave is marked by a simple stone.

Following Mr. Allen was the Rev. Caleb Cushing who came from Scituate. Born 1673, ordained 1698. He married in 1699 Elizabeth,widow of Rev. James Allen. Mr. Cushing died Jan. 25, 1752, after a pastorate of fifty-six years.

Such were the men who held the care of the church for the first one hundred years, and they builded strong and well.

Having treated of the town and its subdivisions into new municipalities and very briefly described the leading families, I shall trace the growth of the town and its leading industries. During the years immediately succeeding the settlement of the town the gain in population and wealth must have been rapid. In 1642 Salisbury's share of the province tax was £12, 10 s, out of a total of £800, while Salem paid £45, and Boston £120. The manufacture of staves and other products of the forests was their leading occupation, staves being especially a leading article of commerce. To cut this timber into lumber for building purposes as well as for a supply for ship building and export purposes a saw mill was an imperative necessity,and we find that in 1641 a grant of sixty acres of land was made to William Osgood if he build a mill for the use of the town. Was not this,the first mill in the new town, located adjacent to the settlement,and where more probably than on Little River,where it flows down into the great meadows? It is hardly probable that Osgood would go so far away as to the banks of the Powow and harness this powerful monster while the tranquil stream near at hand was ready to do his bidding with no large outlay of time or money. Following close upon the building of a saw mill another important plant was

needed, and we have record that Abraham Morrill and Henry Saywood built a grist mill near the falls on the Powow as early as 1642. Concerning this mill I have no definite information. In 1650 William Osgood is given liberty to use all pine trees west of path from John Bayley's to Exeter, if he set a saw mill before the last of May, 1652. Was not this the first saw mill on the Powow, soon to be followed by Currier's in 1656 on the west bank of this turbulent stream? William Osgood early had a grist mill on the river, as in his will he gives half of mill to grandson, John Osgood, but that he built a mill there for sawing logs in 1652 there can be no doubt, as Nathan Gould testified in 1652, September, that he saw the mill at Salisbury. It was then built and going and had gone all summer. These several mills with others soon to be erected must have given steady employment to the inhabitants who, with clearing up the land ready for the plough, clearing off of rocks which we now see in long lines of stone wall, every rod of which speaks of the toil of our ancestors, the building of frame buildings to take the place of the first log houses that had been built to supply the temporary wants of the inhabitants, all of these, with road building, hunting of wild animals, such as the bear, wolf, fox, so harmful to the farmer's stock, left little time for study, and as a result we find the following generations immediately succeeding the first arrivals but indifferently educated. Yet, nevertheless, were they learning that priceless lesson of patriotism and self reliance which in a later age offered defiance to the mother country. Ship building was also early undertaken by the settlers of the town. George Carr, who lived on Carr's Island in 1642 and had charge of the ferry during the whole of his life time, was probably the first to build vessels on the Merrimac, an industry destined to grow to large proportions, when a hundred years later both banks of the Merrimac were lined with yards where the sound of the axe and saw gave constant testimony of these busy hives of industry. Carr's ferry, by the way, was at that time the only public conveyance across the Merrimac.

At high noon on the Merrimac
The ancient ferryman
Forgot, at times, his idle oars,
So fair a freight to skim.

And when from off his grounded boat
He saw them mount and ride,
God keep her from the evil eye,
And harm of witch! he cried.

And along this road passed Andrew, the brave lover, with his fair freight (whom he had rescued from the sheriff) to a refuge in a distant settlement.

Already within ten years the question of subsistence had become a serious one. So many settlers had arrived as to draw heavily on the resources of the country. Thus early it had been found that the natural fertility of the soil was capable of furnishing only three or four crops before becoming exhausted, and the common practice of manuring with fish left the land less fertile than if none had been used. I refer to this as showing that the occupation of farming at that day was one of only moderate returns, and like all strictly agricultural communities, famine was ever to be feared. Here did our forefathers display a degree of wisdom which has in late years redounded to their honor. Manufactures and commerce were added to the industries of farming and the fishing. These four lines of labor have developed a nation of magnificent proportions.

In closing allow me to mention a few historic spots and events therewith connected. Here around this circular road skirting the salt marsh, down the road past the depot, and continuing until just beyond the present church, were the house lots of the first settlers, snugly packed into this little settlement, both for mutual pro-

tection and also I believe in the endeavor of settling the land according to the village system so prevalent in Europe. Here right on yonder common at the corner stood the church with the road eight rods wide, whence all the inhabitants assembled on each succeeding Sabbath and lecture day to gather words of wisdom. Just west of the church towards the ferry stood the court house where for fifty years the county courts were held, while on the rising ground to the north stood the garrison, ready to furnish protection against the wily Indians. Down this path to the dock passed all the commerce of the town, staves and provisions taken in scows to the Merrimac, and there transfered to the mighty ships of those days. Following the ferry road we come to Carr's Island. This was the way of rapid transit. Here, spanning the way to the island in 1655, was Carr's floating bridge, 270 feet long, costing £300.

About the first question for the town to consider was the granting of lands to the settlers. The first order was that there should be two divisions of land, the one nearer, the other further. The nearer 4 acres to each £100 of property, the other to further consideration. This land was given out not equally or at the pleasure of the person receiving it, but carefully, that the interest of the town might not suffer harm thereby. The roads to Hampton, to Amesbury, to the beach and mill were early laid out, and the others as necessity called for them. All of these roads were from four to eight rods wide originally, but with the interval of two hundred years they have from some unexplained causes suffered a slow but steady encroachment of their boundaries, until many of them are hardly one-half of their former generous proportions. Along these roads have passed the generations that have preceded us. Along this road came the legislature to their session in the first parish meeting house, where from Aug. 10th until Oct. 20th they considered the running of the state line. Along this road in 1662 came the three Quaker women at the cart's tail.

Then on they passed in the waning day,
Through Seabrook woods, a weariful way,
By great salt meadows, and sand hills bare,
And glimpses of blue sea here and there.

By the meeting house in Salisbury town
The sufferers stood, in the red sun down
Bare far the lash! O pitying night,
Drop swift thy curtain and hide the sight.

And here on yonder square was the warrant executed, but let honor be bestowed to Walter Barefoot who took charge of these poor creatures and saved them from further punishment. Along this road came the messengers asking assistance to withstand the Indians in their raids, and along this road came the troops hurrying to their assistance.

Here on yonder square gathered on each returning muster day the yeomen of the town to be trained in military duty, and here Major Pike, Capt. Bradbury, Capt. True and others directed their evolutions.

In concluding this rambling paper I have not attempted to add much of original research, but have endeavored to bring together into concise form a varied amount of material not readily available to the casual reader, and if in so doing I have been able to start a superstructure for others to build upon, as material is from time to time becoming available, I shall indeed be more than satisfied.

Thanking you for your kind indulgence and trusting that this gathering may be but the initial meeting of an association formed for historical research to include all of the territory of this ancient town. Can we, as we to-day add to the chapter of her history, say with the poet—

So let it be, in God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight,
And strong in him whose cause is ours
In conflict with unholy powers
We grasp the weapons he has given,—
The light and earth and love of Heaven.

JOHN Q. EVANS.

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